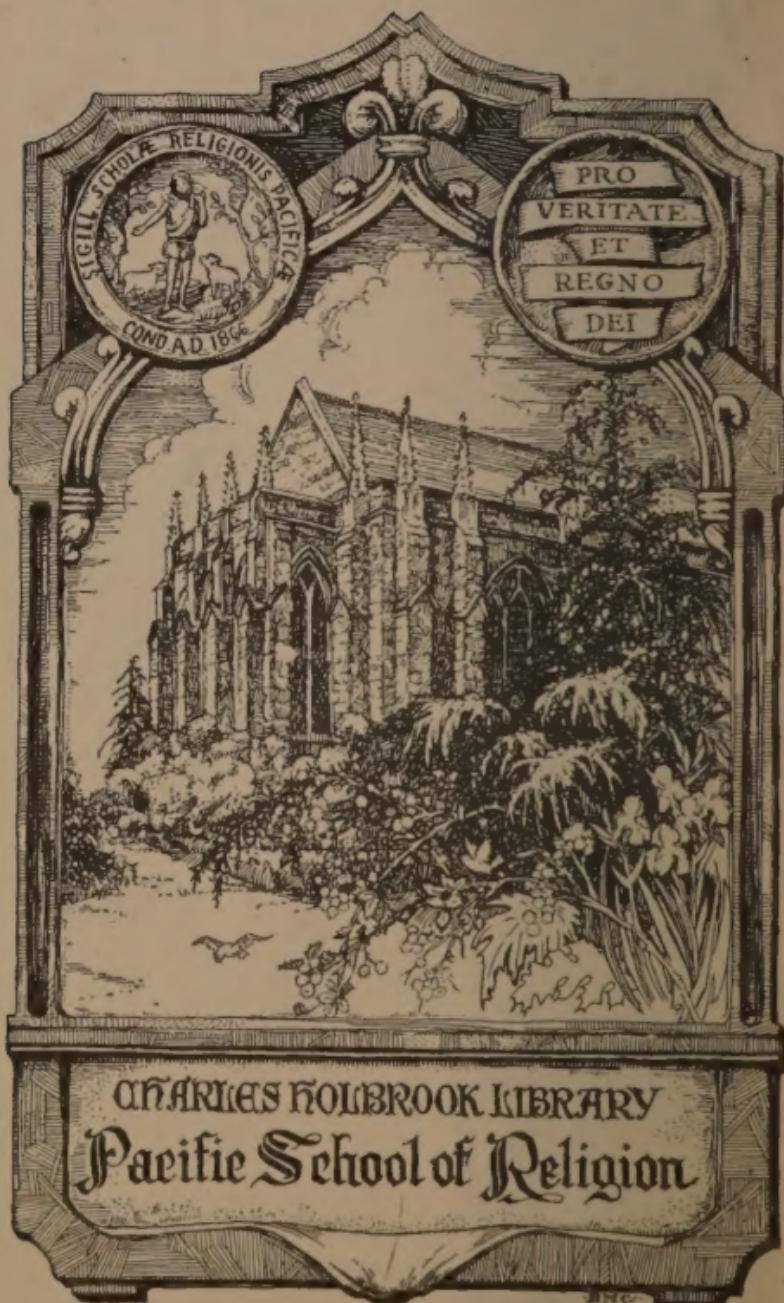
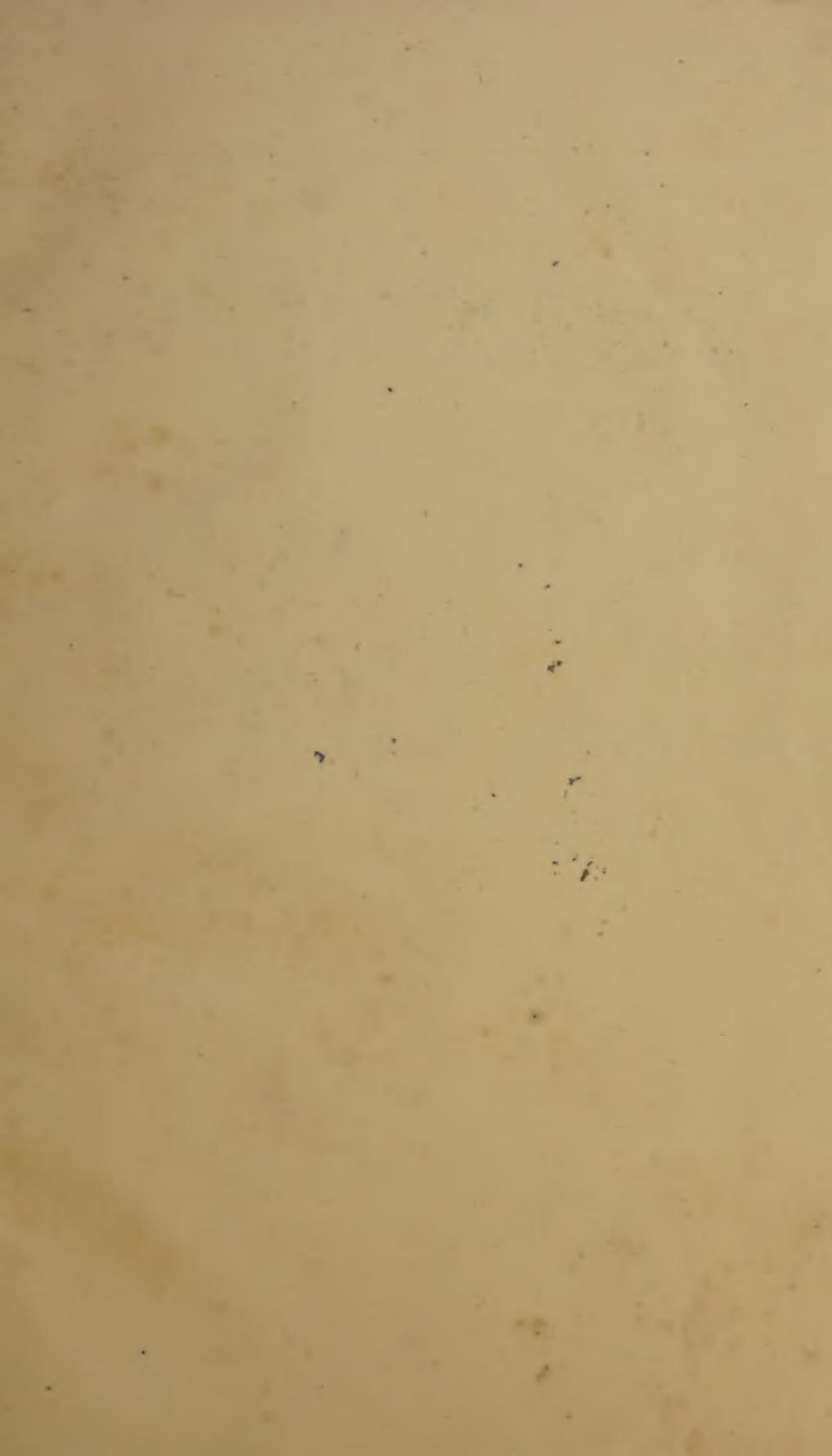
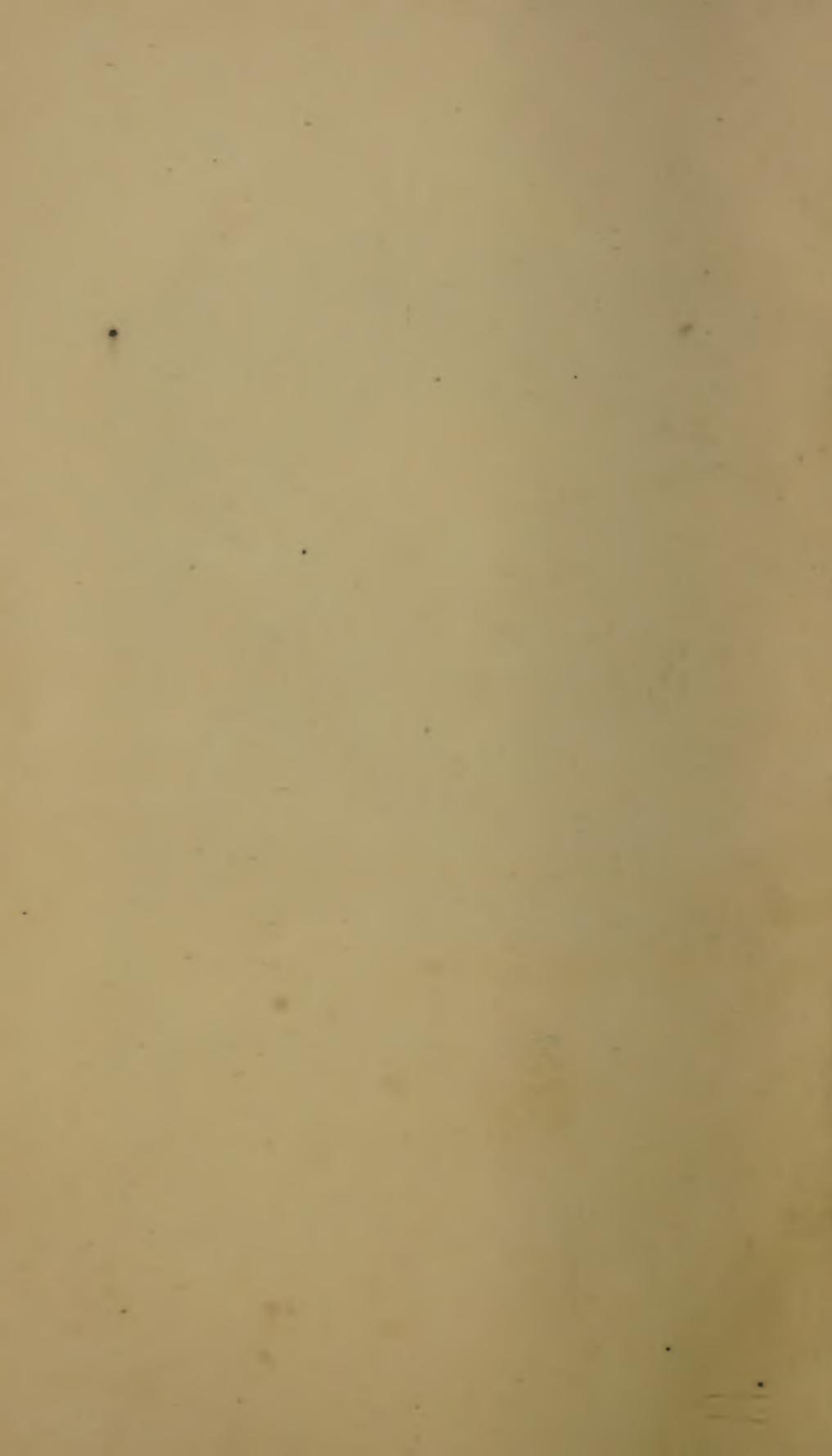


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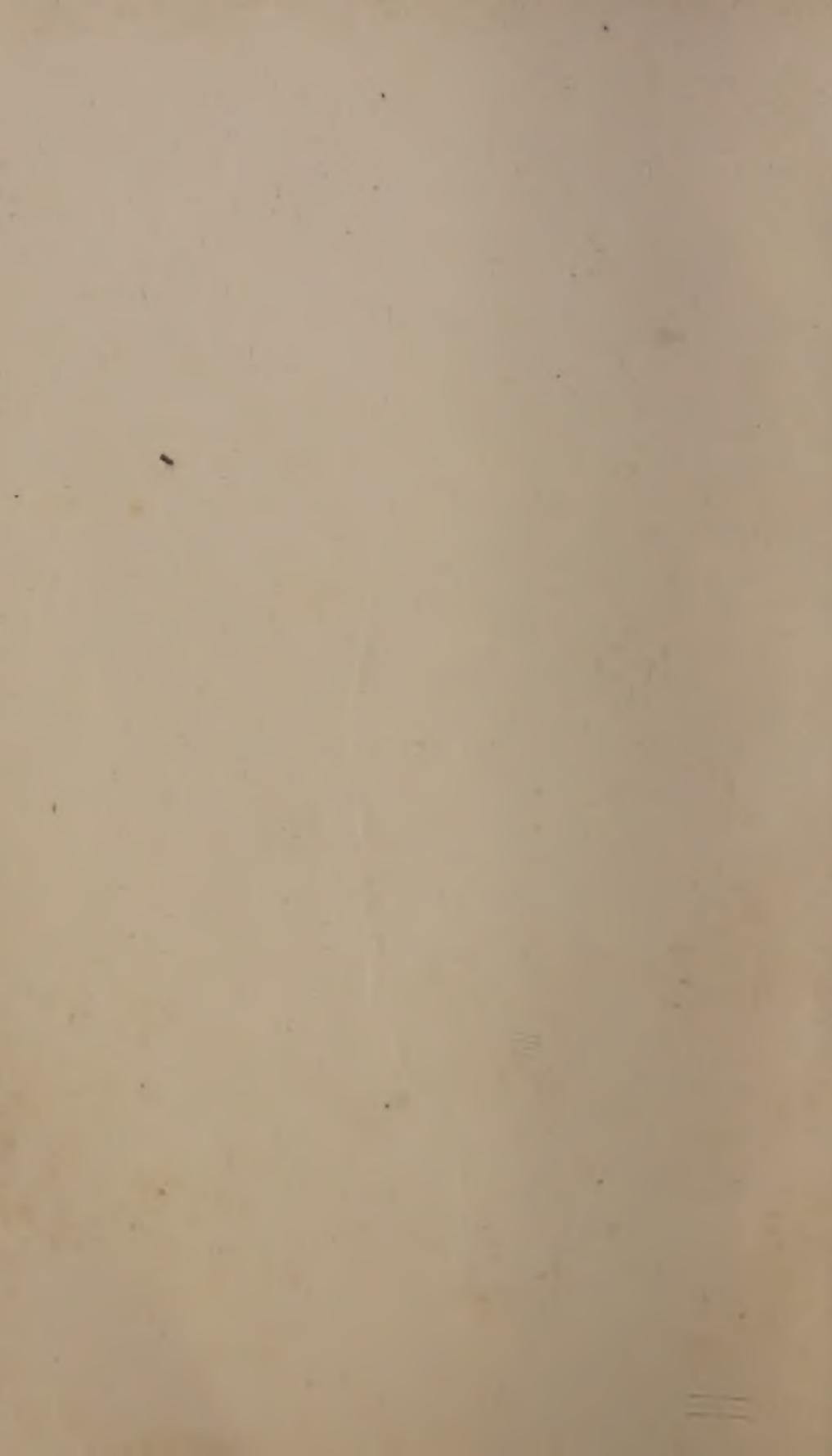






Fredrik A. Strong
from his Uncle
J. G. Bartholomew
Jan. 1865



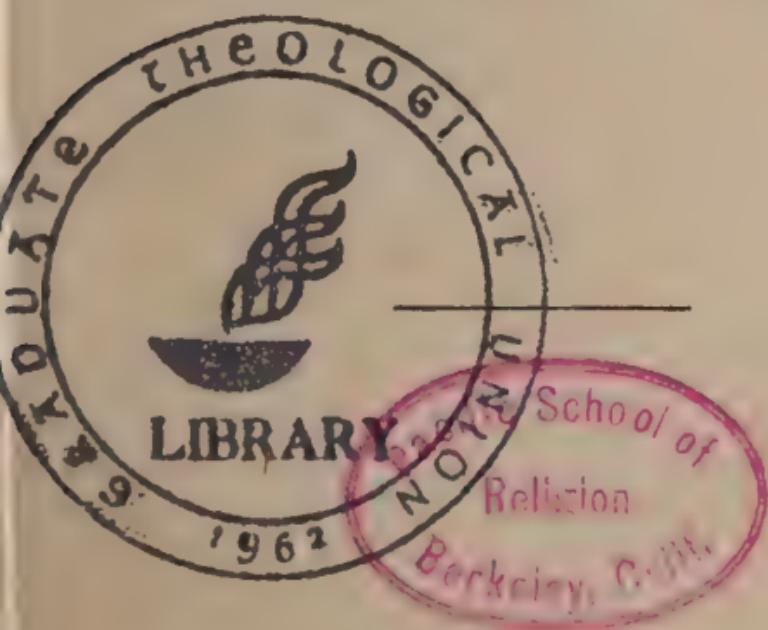


Frontispiece.—The Little Brown House.



Joey Smeaton listening to Henry's reading.

THE
CHILDREN
OF
BLACKBERRY HOLLOW.



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THE LITTLE BROWN HOUSE.



THE LITTLE BROWN HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

PERHAPS you remember, in "Little Lights,"* that Henry Singleton found some boys sitting on the tavern steps, and promised to come and teach them now and then. And so, one Sunday afternoon, Henry sat under the shadow of the woods that overhang the village, and round him were four or five little boys. They looked so ragged and dirty,—these boys did,—so in want of every good thing, that Henry

* One of the series of "Stories of the Children of Blackberry Hollow."

invcluntarily began at once to tell them of One who could supply all their need. The goodness of God, and his power to give,—this was the first thought in Henry's heart as he looked at them; and, opening his little Bible, he took, for his first lesson, these words:—

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened.

“Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?”

“Would he give *us* good things?” said

one of the little boys, when Henry had finished reading the verses.

"Indeed he will," said Henry. "If you ask him, day by day, for the things you want, begging him for Jesus' sake to bless you and take care of you, he will surely do it. For God is more kind than even our own fathers and mothers."

"My father and mother don't hurt 'emselves being kind," said one of the boys, shrugging his shoulders. "Nor his'n neither," he added, nodding his head towards the smallest of the group.

Henry had looked at this boy a good deal; for he was the dirtiest, the most ragged, the most forlorn, as well as the smallest. He had listened to the reading with his elbows on his knees, and his eyes wide open, and with a puzzled, doubtful look of wonder on his little face.

“What is your name?” said Henry to him.

“Joey Smeaton.”

“And where do you live?”

“Up yonder,” said little Joey, pointing through the trees. “In that little brown house.”

“Tell you what,” said one of the other boys, “*his* father give him a stone for bread once. Joey asked for somethin’ to eat, and old Smeaton pitched it right at him. Cut his head open right here,” (pointing to the spot:) “he’s got the scar yet.”

Joey, however, did not seem to want to show the scar; for he dropped his head, so that the long, tangled hair fell down over his face, and hid not only the scar, but the colour which flushed over his pale cheeks.

“You stop!” he said. “My mother’s **as** good as anybody.”

"Guess if she wasn't, old Smeaton would get *his* head broke pretty quick," said the other. "He drinks, sir: that's what Joey was down at the tavern for, to try and fetch him home."

"You stop! will you?" repeated Joey, half crying. "I'll go home."

"No, don't go home, Joey," said his young teacher. "Do you know how to read?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who taught you?"

"Mother did."

"Then come and sit close by me," said Henry, "and look at these beautiful words of the Saviour, while I talk about them."

Joey left his place, accordingly, and, creeping close to Henry's side, fixed his eyes on the verses that Henry had read. And by-and-by it seemed as if he had neither eyes nor ears for any thing else.

Henry did not disturb him, nor call off his attention, but went on telling the other boys about the wonderful love that God hath toward us: trying to teach them about the “unspeakable gift” of the blood of Jesus, which bought not only heaven, but also a blessed life on earth, to all who trust in him. And Joey never stirred nor raised his head until the lesson was done.

“Joey,” said Henry then, “have you heard all I have been saying?”

“Yes.”

“Have you understood it?”

“It’s too wonderful,” said Joey, with a long breath.

“Will you pray to God every day that he will help you, by his Holy Spirit, to understand it?”

“Yes,” said Joey, again.

The other boys rose up, and scattered

away over the hill-side, and Henry took hold of Joey's hand.

"I will walk home with you, Joey," he said. "I want to see where you live."

Joey held his hand in silence, and trudged along over the turf and through the trees, thinking hard.

"I don't want you to go in," he said, suddenly. "You needn't come quite to the door."

"Very well," said Henry. "I will stop just where you tell me. Have you got any brothers and sisters?"

"No," said Joey: "there's only me."

"And what do you do all day?" said Henry. "Do you go to school?"

"No," said Joey: "mother'd be all alone. She and me talks."

"And she teaches you to read," said Henry.

"No," said Joey, again. "She did once; but we haven't got any books, now."

"Haven't you got a Bible?" said Henry.

"No," Joey answered: "I don't know what that is."

"Why, it's this very book you've been reading in this afternoon," said Henry.

"Is it?" said Joey, looking at the little volume in Henry's hand. "Is that a Bible? I guess it's very good to have that."

"Indeed it is," said Henry; "and you shall have one. I can't give you this, Joey, because my mother gave it to me; but I'll give you another."

Joey smiled: the look of pleasure on his unwashed, pale little face, coming like a ray of sunlight into a very dusty room.

"Is it true?" he said.

"Every word of it."

"All that about giving things?"

"All that, Joey, and much more besides."

"Then he ain't much like people," was Joey's comment.

"Doesn't your mother like to give you things?" said Henry.

"I guess she would, if she had 'em," said the child, thoughtfully. "But, you see, she's got nothing herself."

"Well, Joey," said his teacher, "every thing belongs to God. The silver and the gold are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills; for he made the world, and the things that are therein. So he has the power to give us any thing that we need. But, you see, that would not do us much good if he did not love us too."

"No, I guess it wouldn't," said Joey,

remembering that his own father had plenty of money sometimes.

"But God loves his children so well that he always takes care of them," Henry went on. "Now, Joey, look at that little bird on the fence."

"Yes, I see him," said Joey, looking at a robin that was hopping along on the top rail.

"Where do you think he gets his breakfast and dinner and supper?" said Henry.

"Oh, he just picks 'em up," replied Joey. "He eats the worms, and the cherries, and the wild grapes. I've seen him often."

"How does he know where to find them?" said Henry.

"I can't tell," said Joey. "I know he beats me finding out where grapes are; for he gets 'em all eat up, sometimes,

long before I can know where they are."

"Well, who makes the grape-vines grow and bear fruit?"

"I don't know that, neither," said Joey. "Why, they just grow. And the grapes has to get ripe when the sun shines on 'em."

"Ah! but then who sends the sun-light upon them?" said Henry. "And who made the ground in which they grow? You see, Joey, God not only made every thing, but he takes care of every thing; and so he will of you."

"You think he will?" said Joey.

"I'll tell you what he says about it himself," said Henry. "Listen: these words are in the Bible:—

"Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father

feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they?"

" 'Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?'"

Joey listened, with his eyes fixed on the robin, and, as the last of the sweet words were spoken, he drew a long, deep sigh,—half of pleasure, as it seemed, and half of pain. His teacher was silent for a few minutes, and then he spoke to him again.

" Joey, what would you think of anybody that should give his own life to save your's?"

" I'd think—he thought a good deal of me," said Joey.

" Well, these are some more Bible words," said Henry:—

" 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoso-

ever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'

"Joey, that was done for you, and for me, and for every other poor perishing sinner!"

Again the listening child drew a sort of sighing breath; then suddenly he stopped and turned short round in the path before Henry.

"You mustn't go any nearer," he said.

"Very well," said Henry. "But aren't we a good way off yet?"

"No," said Joey: "it's just round that big tree. 'Ta'n't like your house," he added, looking up with a sort of apology to his kind friend and teacher's face.

"Good-by, then," said Henry. "You won't forget what I've told you?"

"I couldn't forget," said Joey.

So Henry Singleton turned away towards his own pleasant home on Church Hill; and poor little Joey passed round the big tree to the door of the little brown house.



CHAPTER II.

IT was a very little house, painted brown by the weather, and not with paint; and, though there was a window each side of the front door, there was hardly a whole pane of glass in either of them. An old hat, an apron, and sundry bits of old quilts stopped up some of the holes,—keeping out the air, if they did not let in the light; and a great hemlock-tree—perhaps over a hundred years old—stretched its long arms out over the little hut and gave it a shadow of protection.

Near by, a little spring bubbled up out of the ground; but it found no sweet

passage for itself down to Stony Brook; for a half-grown pig had appropriated the ground all around it, turning the same into a garden of mud, where three or four chickens stepped about with wet feet. Other garden there was none.

Joey went up to the door, opened it softly, and went in. If Henry had gone with him, he would have found a room with bare floor and bare walls, a little, old cooking-stove in the fireplace, a table, standing on three legs, propped up against the wall to supply the place of the fourth. But whereas the table stood on three legs, so the wooden stool stood on two, being kept in countenance by one broken chair and one whole one. A few years ago, when Joey was a baby, there had been a nice rag-carpet on the floor, and the table and chairs were new and stood on all their legs. The windows were whole

then, too, and the stove was brushed and blacked till it shone again. Then the bed in the next room had a good quilted comfortable and woollen spread; but now look at it!—more like a heap of rags than any thing; for the bedstead is gone, and what bedclothes there are lie tumbled together on the floor.

What do you think had become of them all? for carpets and chairs do not wear out in so few years, and, if they get ever so tired of being walked over and sat upon, they cannot run away. What had become of them? Alas! they had been sold, one by one,—carried down to the village, and sold. Not for food, not for clothes, but for RUM! Once Joey's father had been a working-man, but now he was a drinking-man; and a more dreadful difference there can hardly be. Do you think he cared that Joey and his

mother slept on those rags on the floor, instead of their comfortable bed?—not a bit. I don't know how it happened that he had left one whole chair in the house; but I suppose that, too, would go in time. As for the glass in the windows, that had not indeed been sold; but when Joey's father came home in a fit of ill-humour, (which was very often,) he used to throw any thing that came to hand at his wife and child; and, as he had often been drinking too much to aim straight, the windows got broken, instead of their heads. Ah! he had forgotten that the Bible says, "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God." If he spoke the name of God at all, it was only in fearful oaths and curses; and, if the Lord had not been "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth," he would surely have answered

this man's curses, and struck him dead in a moment!

When Joey opened the door and went in, his father was not at home, and his mother sat in the one whole chair, looking as forlorn as did every thing about her. She did not speak to Joey, and he said not a word to her, but laid the little stool down on one side, so that it could not tumble over, and sat down there. The beautiful light was gleaming through the tree-tops, and the birds were singing sweetly. Joey sat listening to them. To him, they seemed to be singing, over and over, the words that Henry Singleton had read, and Joey felt as if he were in a new world. But, by-and-by, a little of the world that was not new came back to him; for Joey grew very hungry.

"Mother," he said at last, "is there any supper?"

"Where should it come from?" said his mother, sharply.

"I thought there was a little bread left this morning," said Joey.

"So there was; but your father came home and eat every crumb," replied his mother.

Joey was silent, drawing his little jacket together. His mother looked at him.

"You poor child, you!" she said. And then she burst into a terrible fit of crying.

Joey had often seen her do so before, and had often cried with her; but to-day it seemed as if one of those bright sunbeams had found its way into his youthful heart, and could not get out again. So, though the tears came welling up into his sad eyes, he was very quiet.

“Mother,” he said, at length, “don’t you cry! I’ll go and try if I can’t find some supper.”

“You sha’n’t beg!” said his mother, with the same sharp tone that she had used at first.

“No, I won’t beg,” said Joey. “I’ll go and see if I can’t find some strawberries. Let’s both go, mother.”

“I don’t want any, child. You won’t find more than enough for yourself,” replied the mother.

“Oh, yes, may-be I will,” said Joey; “for you know, mother, God makes the strawberries grow. And I s’pose he can just as easy make a good many as a few. Come, mother.”

“Where did you pick up that notion, child?” said his mother, looking at him in perfect astonishment. But she did as he had asked her,—got up, and took her old

sun-bonnet, and followed Joey out of the door.

“ See! ” said Joey, “ a’n’t it beautiful? Did you know that God made the sun-shine, mother? ”

But his mother burst into tears again at that, and went sobbing up the little path after Joey.

Joey’s eyes had filled up again, too, and a few little twinkling drops were even trying to run over; but he went stoutly up the hill, looking at every bird he could see, for comfort. The path wound about through the woods, ever mounting higher and higher, until at last it came out upon a cleared field. Here the grass grew long and fresh, and hidden among it, here and there, were the wild strawberry-vines and their nice scarlet fruit. The children of the village often came here for strawberries; and

they grew in such an abundance, and ripened so fast, that, while the season lasted, there was always a very good supply.

Joey was down on his knees directly among the strawberries, picking and eating them with an eagerness that showed how hungry he was. But though his mother ate a few, to please her boy, and though she might well be hungry for all she had eaten that day, she was thinking too busily to want strawberries. But how sweet they were to Joey, even without sugar!

“Where have you been all the afternoon, Joey?” she said, at last.

“Oh, I’ve been under the trees, top of the village hill, with the other boys,” said Joey. “Henry Singleton’s been reading to us.”

“Henry Singleton! that lives in that

large, handsome house on the Church Hill?"

"Yes," said Joey, with his mouth full of strawberries.

"I wish he'd taken you home and given you a good dinner," said Joey's mother. "That would have been more to the purpose."

"Why, he didn't know, mother, I hadn't had dinner," said Joey. "And I didn't tell him. He's going to give me a Bible."

"What use?" said his mother. "It'll be sold, just as mine was, by your father."

"Why, did you ever have a Bible, mother?" said Joey, looking up in surprise.

"I had a great many things once, my poor child," said his mother, sighing deeply.

"And did you ever read it, mother?" said Joey.

"To be sure I did. What's the use of having a Bible if you don't read it?"

"Oh, then you know all about the sparrows and robins, and how God feeds 'em," said Joey. "A'n't it beautiful?"

But his mother only wept and sobbed at that, rocking herself to and fro in a passion of grief.

"Why does it make you cry?" said Joey. "It made me so glad. 'Cause if he looks out for the birds, he's sure to do it for us."

"I don't think he has yet," said Joey's mother, wiping away her tears.

"Oh, well, may-be he didn't begin before," said Joey, picking away at the ripe strawberries. "And I'll tell you why, mother; 'cause we have never asked him."

"Well, the birds don't, no more," said his mother.

"But they don't know how," said Joey; "and we do. He told us all about that."

"Do you know how?" said his mother.

"Not much," said Joey; "but I mean to learn. It's just asking. And it a'n't hard to ask, mother."

"It's pretty hard to ask some people," said his mother, bitterly.

"Yes, some people," said Joey; "so it is. But then God a'n't like people:—that's the thing. He's our heavenly Father, and so different."

So different from what?—Ah! his mother knew.

"Joey, Joey!" she cried. "You poor little fatherless child!"

"No," said Joey, "we've both got a Father in heaven, mother; and I'm going to ask him to take care of us."

So, as by this time the sun was down, Joey and his mother left the strawberry field, and began to walk towards home.

Now, as they passed one of the little cottages on their way, a woman stood at the door of it, looking out.

“Joey,” she said, “have you seen my cow?”

“No, ma’am,” said Joey.

“Well, now, find her for me, that’s a good boy,” said the woman, “and you sha’n’t be the worse for it.”

Joey was not so sure of that; for he was pretty well tired, and one cannot run so far without any dinner as he can with some. However, he set off at once for the cow; and when he had hunted all through Blackberry Hollow, he found the perverse old creature down by the village, standing with her feet in Stony Brook. So he drove her home, a glad and tired little boy.

But, then, what do you think? The woman made him wait a few minutes, and then she brought out a good bowl of the warm milk from the cow, and bade him drink it all up, which you may be sure he did.

“Well,” said Joey to himself, as he ran home, “if God did not get me my supper to-night, I should just like to know who did.”



CHAPTER III.

You cannot think what a change had come over Joey's life. Before, he had been a dull, listless child,—often hungry, and often cross,—sometimes sitting and moping all day with his mother, and sometimes playing and getting knocked about among the village-boys. He never thought of trying to do any thing; and though, long ago, his mother had taught him to read, it was of little use to him now; for all their books had been parted with long ago. His mother used to work, and earn money; but when that began to be taken from her as fast as she got it, and she found that instead of buying food and clothes for Joey it went to buy strong

drink for his father, then the poor woman gave up in despair. And now she seldom did any work at all, except taking a few stitches now and then in Joey's old clothes, just to keep them together.

But the world was changed to Joey; and, instead of moping and fretting when he first got up that bright Monday morning, he actually swept out the house, and whistled all the while!

"What has happened to you, child?" said his mother. "A'n't you hungry?"

"Yes," said Joey; "I s'pose I am. But I'm happy."

"I can't guess what you're happy about," said his mother, rather sharply.

"Why, it's so pleasant to think God loves us," said Joey. "Don't it make you happy, mother? We never had anybody love us before."

A sort of spasm passed over his mother's

face, and she didn't speak for a minute. Joey swept away.

"Why, Joey," she said, at last, "I always loved you."

"Oh, yes, mother," said Joey, "I know you did, and I didn't forget it, neither. But then you haven't the *power*. That's the thing. Henry Singleton says God loves us, and that he has the power to do just what he likes. So you see there's no danger."

"Well, hasn't he had the power all along?" said Joey's mother.

"I s'pose so," said Joey; "but, you see, I never asked him before. And I have, as I told you, to-day."

"What did you ask him?" said his mother, looking at Joey curiously.

"Oh, I asked him to please to love us all the time, first," said Joey, "'cause that's the best, you know: don't you

think so, mother? It makes me feel so warm here,"—and Joey laid his hands on his breast. "And then I said, if he'd take care of us every day we'd thank him so much."

"Joey," said his mother, "where did you learn all that?"

"I don't know," said Joey: "may-be I heard some of it out of the Bible. And some of it, I guess, I thought myself, But it's like what's in the Bible, I know that. Oh, when I get *my* Bible, mother, you and I can sit and read it all day. 'Cause we've nothing else to do."

"You won't keep your Bible a week, child," said his mother. "It'll be sold, right off."

"No, it won't," said Joey, sturdily. "I'll hide it."

"He'll find it, if you do," said his mother.

“Guess not,” said Joey, shaking his head very positively. “I’ll ask God to show me a place where he *can’t* find it.”

“Do you mean to ask God to help you do every thing, child?”

“I guess it’ll be the best way,” said Joey. “He loves me, you know, mother, and he’s got the power.”

“You think he’ll take any notice of such a youngster as you are?” said his mother, despondingly.

“Why, mother,” said Joey, “I’m a great deal bigger than the robins. And just look at the way they’re eating their breakfast. Tell you what, I must hurry off after mine.”

“I thought God was going to get it for you,” said his mother.

Joey stood still, considering the matter. Then he looked out at the robins, running about on the grass after insects, and hop-

ping up and down in a wild cherry-tree to pick the fruit. Joey saw the whole thing in a moment.

"Yes, mother," he said, "God will give it to me. I've asked him. But, then, may-be I've got to go and find it." And Joey put on his old straw hat, and ran down the hill, and his mother sat in the door and looked after him, and cried.

Joey ran on, wondering in his little heart where the Lord had put his breakfast that morning, and very much hoping that he might find it before it grew *too* late. For, to say the truth, Joey was very hungry. And, although not doubting that his breakfast *might* be provided in any place, it seemed so natural that he should find it somewhere in the neighbourhood of the baker's that Joey bent his steps that way. The baker was standing at his door.

"Here, youngster," he called out, beckoning Joey towards him; "are you an honest boy?"

Joey looked wistfully at the well-fed baker, and answered, "Yes, sir."

"My boy's took sick all of a sudden," said the baker, "and can't carry round the bread; and here's breakfast waiting all over the village."

"Waiting?" said Joey, wondering very much at the state of things. "Who for?"

"Why, for the bread, of course," said the baker. "I've got nobody to send with it. I wonder, now, if you a'n't man enough to do the job?"

"Yes, sir," said Joey, "I guess so."

"I'll give you a shilling if you carry it quick and safe," said the baker. "Here; come in and look at it: this is the basket."

He pulled little Joey into the shop, where there was such a smell of warm, fresh bread that Joey thought he had never been in such a delightful place in his life. And there stood the basket, piled up with brown, crusted loaves of bread, and smoking rolls, just out of the oven.

“This is it,” said the baker, handing him the basket. “Now, I’ll put it up on your shoulder; and here’s the list of places. Can you read?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Well, take the list in your hand, then, and don’t make any mistakes; and, when you come back, I’ll give you a shilling, and then another basket to carry, may-be.”

“Thank you, sir,” said the little man; and he moved off. But, besides that he was almost faint as well as hungry, the smell

of the new bread almost overpowered him, and two or three hot tears found their way down his cheeks.

“Please, heavenly Father, don’t let me wait too long,” Joey whispered, in the sadness of his heart.

“That’s a pale little chap,” said the baker, standing in the door.

“Yes,” said his wife; “and if I’d been you I’d ha’ given him some breakfast before he started. He’s no more fit to carry that basket than I am to pick up Church Hill.”

“But our customers are waiting,” said the baker.

“Let them wait, then,” said his wife. “Or give the child a roll to eat as he goes along.”

“Here, you youngster! Hallo!” cried the baker.

Joey stopped, and turned round.

“Come back!” shouted the baker.

“Wait, till I butter it,” cried his wife, running in, with her face all aglow. And in a second she had pulled open one of the great double rolls, and put in a bit of fresh butter and a little slice of cold beef. Then she closed the nice roll up again, and it looked as innocent as possible.

“A clean face,” said the baker’s wife, stooping down by Joey;—and, indeed, his face was very clean this morning. “Bless me! what pale cheeks! Guess you haven’t had your breakfast yet: have you?”

“No, ma’am,” said Joey.

“Thought not,” said the baker’s wife. “Well, now you can eat this roll as you go along, and I guess the people will get their breakfast all the quicker for your having yours.”

“Do you know who got your break-

fast for you?" said the baker, looking with great satisfaction from his kind wife to Joey, and meaning that he should acknowledge his obligation to her.

"Oh, yes, sir," said Joey, looking up. "God got it for me. I knew he would."



CHAPTER IV.

I DO not mean to say that I am glad the baker's boy fell sick; but I cannot be sorry to tell you that from that morning little Joey had his place. And, as a matter of course, he always had his breakfast. Then, when the bread was all carried round to the customers, the baker gave him a shilling, and Joey went off homeward as happy as a robin. Only one thing troubled him, and his mother too. If his father should happen to find out that he had money, it would surely be taken away,—every cent of it,—to satisfy his cravings for drink. What should he do? Where should he hide it? Part of it, of course,

was spent every day, for Joey and his mother had a regular dinner and supper now, as well as breakfast; but still there were always some pennies left over; and his mother said,—

“Take care of them, my dear Joey; for if you can’t get a winter coat in this way, I’m afraid you never will have one in any other way.”

So Joey thought about the matter a great deal, and he prayed that God would teach him how to do.

“I might hide ‘em away in a little box,—if I only had a box,” said Joey to his mother. “But then, mother, if father should ask me what the baker gave me——”

“Tell him that the baker gave you nothing but your breakfast,” replied his mother.

“No,” said Joey: “that wouldn’t do

at all. Because, you see, mother, that would be a sin; and since the Lord Jesus died to take away my sins, it 'll never do for me to go and get right into 'em again."

"Then you must manage it in your own way, my dear child," said his mother.

"Mother," said Joey, "I think I'll take 'em up to Henry Singleton every day, and he'll keep 'em for me till I can get enough."

"I wouldn't go every day, Joey," said his mother. "Go once a week. Sometimes you haven't more than a penny or two left."

"No more I haven't," said Joey; "but, if I had only two, father might hear 'em chink in my pocket. I guess I'll go every day."

So, every day, after he had bought a

few pennies' worth of bread and meat and tea, Joey would trudge all the way up Church Hill to Henry Singleton's house, and put his spare penny or two in his friend's safe-keeping. Henry agreed to take the best possible care of them,—and so he did; for, every day, when Joey had put his pennies into the small box Henry had used for them, and had gone away, Henry would put in just as many more out of his own pocket. The little money-box grew quite heavy in the course of time; and so summer came to an end.

“Mother,” said Joey, one day, “I only wish you had some of my breakfast every morning! You never tasted any thing so good.”

“I’m glad,” said his mother. “I always have enough, my child, left over from supper.”

“That’s not at all like my breakfast, though,” said Joey. “Mother, how happy we are now, with my Bible and my shilling!”

“Well, child, you ought to be happy,” said his mother, “you’re such a good boy.”

“Am I?” said Joey. “I’m so glad! I think it’s very dreadful for a boy that the Lord Jesus has died for, to be bad. Now, mother, where do you think my father is?”

“I’m sure I don’t know, my child. He has been away, now, for about six weeks.”

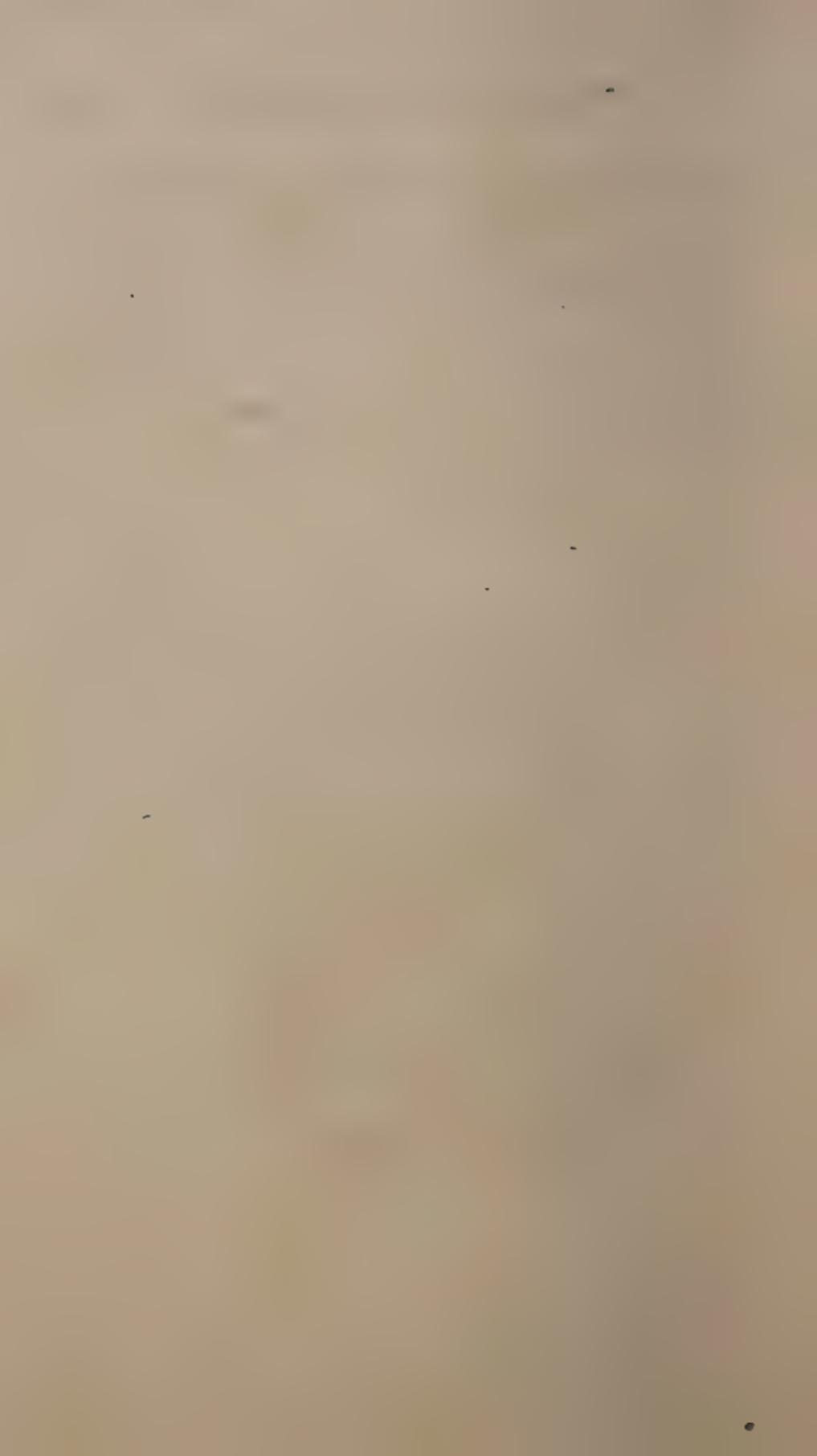
“But he’s often been away before,” said Joey. “Mother, do you know, I think God will take care of him?”

“Do you?” said his mother. “Why should he, Joey?”

“Why, mother,” said Joey, “you know

the Bible says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive ;' and I've been asking the Lord Jesus to tell father that he loves him and died for him. I think if he only knew that, he'd come right home, and never be bad any more."





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